

60th Engineers set to deploy

By Cheryl Rodewig / The Bayonet

"Anytime my country calls, I'll go," said SSG Gabriel Jefferson, who will deploy to Afghanistan Sunday with the 60th Engineer Company (Vertical).

The primary mission for the company during their 12-month deployment will be construction, said CPT Daniel Andrews, the company commander.

"We're trying to expand the capabilities to house troops for the surge that's coming to Afghanistan, and then project combat power out — build outposts for the Infantry wherever they deem they need to be placed," Andrews said.

"Also, we're uniquely suited to win the counterinsurgency by adding to the infrastructure: to help the local populace build schools, do water supply systems, the electrical utilities, whatever they need," he said. "What we do will help establish a foothold for the Infantry so they can come in and conduct their counterinsurgency fight."



The company celebrated their upcoming mission Monday at Doughboy Stadium with friends and family.

Many Soldiers and families, like PV2 William and Rachel Paupst, were facing the challenges of a deployment for the first time.

"It's very hard ... very emotional, especially with three little ones and one on the way, but at the same time, it's his job. Luckily, there is good support from a lot of the wives," she said.

The Paupst family arrived at Fort Benning, their first duty station, in October.

"We're just settling in, getting comfortable with Army life," Rachel said. "It was always (William's) passion to join the Army ... what he has always wanted to do. I'm so proud of him. It's my honor to support him and stand behind him."

For Jessica Jefferson, supporting her husband, SSG Gabriel Jefferson, is part of her responsibility.

"We have to be positive here, so that they can stay focused over there ... so they can do their job and not have to worry and be stressed," she said.

Gabriel said his family understood that doing his job was an important part of supporting them.

"To me, my family will be safe if I do my part. My wife knows I'm supporting her and I care about her, and my children know, too. I'm confident in my wife that she'll take care of my family, and she has faith in me that I'll do my job and come back safely."

Their daughter, 7-year-old Lauren, has faith in her father, too.

"I think my dad's really brave," she said. "As soon as he leaves, the next day, I'll miss him. (But) I'm glad he's in his job, because I know he's supporting the country and everyone in it and us."